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## FACT SHEET

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### Center for Families, Children & the Courts

The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), Center for Families, Children & the Courts (CFCC) is dedicated to improving the quality of justice and services to meet the diverse needs of children, youth, families, self-represented litigants, and other users of the California courts. CFCC works closely with the Judicial Council's Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee and Collaborative Justice Courts Advisory Committee, as well as the council's Task Force on Self-Represented Litigants, Domestic Violence Practice and Procedure Task Force, Task Force for Criminal Justice Collaboration on Mental Health Issues, Elkins Family Law Task Force, Juvenile Delinquency Court Improvement Resource Group, and the Blue Ribbon Commission on Children in Foster Care. CFCC provides courts and court-connected agencies statewide with legal and court services, research, educational and training opportunities, print and electronic publications, and financial assistance.

In 2003 the American Bar Association's Government and Public Sector Lawyers Division presented CFCC with the Hodson Award for Public Service in recognition of CFCC's sustained and outstanding commitment to serving Californians.

#### Services and Programs

##### **Legal services**

CFCC facilitates the development of California Rules of Court, Judicial Council forms, and California Standards of Judicial Administration. CFCC attorneys provide legal services for Judicial Council advisory groups, other AOC divisions, the courts, and court-connected programs. The center also supplies the public with general legal information through its question-and-answer team, Web sites, online resources, and multimedia legal materials and publications.

### **Court services**

CFCC's statewide leadership and outreach extend to the statewide court system through support, consultation, technical assistance, and direct administration. Self-help centers and the AB 1058 Child Support Facilitator program, supported by CFCC staff, provide information and education to nearly one million individuals in every superior court in the state. Child support commissioners, funded through the AB 1058 program, hear 1.6 million cases each year. CFCC supports 400 collaborative justice courts in 56 jurisdictions, resulting in taxpayer savings through reduced recidivism. Technical assistance has enhanced court compliance with rules and statutes and improved caseflow management. The Domestic Violence Safety Partnership (DVSP) project provides courts with a comprehensive self-assessment tool and tailors technical assistance to enhance safety, improve practice, and identify needed resources for the courts in domestic violence cases. Supported by CFCC liaisons, newly created local commissions are implementing recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Children in Foster Care.

Providing direct administration of services in dependency cases in 20 courts, the Court-Appointed Counsel (CAC) program has increased intercounty parity in compensation, workload, and the quality of representation.

### **Research**

CFCC conducts research for the development of court policy, innovative strategies, and effective programs. Current research projects include providing cost-benefit analysis for drug courts, evaluating best practices in juvenile delinquency and dependency court, implementing quantitative measurement of outcomes in juvenile court, examining issues of family violence and the courts for California's tribal communities, continuing a multiyear study of participants in court-based child custody mediation, and supporting data collection and outcomes analysis in juvenile court, dependency drug court, Court Appointed Special Advocate agencies, supervised visitation, and other services. Research services include training curricula, briefings and statistical data sheets, legislative reports, program evaluation, research consultation, and technical assistance.

CFCC manages family and juvenile court research databases, including two of the largest data archives in the family law field. The Statewide Uniform Statistical Reporting System (SUSRS) is a longitudinal study with more than 18,000 records from family court services clients. The system provides up-to-date information about trends facing family and juvenile courts. The Family Law Facilitator Database includes

service delivery and demographic information on child support services in all 58 California counties.

### **Education and training**

CFCC's statewide, regional, and local court educational programs fulfill continuing education requirements mandated by statutes, court rules, and professional licensing. Many events bring together multidisciplinary audiences to develop a systemic perspective on common issues. Other programs are designed specifically for judicial officers, court administrators, family court services staff, family law facilitators, legal service providers, or other professionals serving families, children, self-represented family law litigants, and collaborative justice court programs. CFCC is actively involved in efforts to produce cost-effective, on-demand training through use of technology and distance-learning options.

### **Financial assistance and administration**

The AOC is the designated judicial branch administrative entity for several federal and state government funds. CFCC administers some of these funds and also has secured additional grants to support local courts and court-connected programs. Grants underwrite direct court services such as collaborative justice courts, child support commissioners and facilitators, self-help services, Court Appointed Special Advocates, interpreters in family and domestic violence cases, supervised visitation, and parent education. Grant funds are also used to improve court response to domestic violence, delinquency, child abuse and neglect cases, and mentally ill court users.

### **Publications**

CFCC publishes many written materials for a diverse audience of judges, professionals, and court users. These publications—many of which are available in Spanish—include an academic journal, legislative reports, judicial and administrative deskbooks, a children's activity book, a restorative justice resource manual, research briefings, statistical updates, informational pamphlets, and an extensive Web site ([www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/cfcc/](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/cfcc/)). The Web site makes CFCC publications, grants, and other resources available to the public.

Resources for courts and nonprofit legal services agencies providing self-help services are available at [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/equalaccess/](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/equalaccess/). CFCC also maintains a Web site at [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/collab/](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/collab/) that is focused on collaborative justice court programs and a Web site at [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/ccjp/](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/ccjp/) dedicated to assisting California courts and communities in implementing restorative justice principles. In 2008, CFCC launched the California Dependency Online Guide, a free technical assistance Web site for juvenile dependency judicial officers, attorneys,

social workers, and other professionals working in child welfare or related fields. To subscribe, visit [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/dependencyonlineguide](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/dependencyonlineguide).

CFCC collaborates with other AOC divisions to publish judicial handbooks on domestic violence and sexual assault issues and to maintain the California Courts Online Self-Help Center ([www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp/](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp/)), which includes more than 900 pages of information on legal issues, in both English and Spanish.

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*Additional resources:*

Reports and publications, [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/reference/4\\_18fam\\_cfcc.htm](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/reference/4_18fam_cfcc.htm)